




Snohomish County

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

M/S #604

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Terri Strandberg, Principal Planner 

DATE: March 12, 2014

SUBJECT: **2015 Update: General Policy Plan Overview**

The purpose of this memo is to provide an overview of the scope and schedule for the proposed amendments to the General Policy Plan (GPP) as part of the 2015 Update. The 2015 Update focuses on unincorporated urban areas where most of the population and employment growth is expected to occur over the next twenty years, 2015 to 2035. The Planning Commission can expect to see proposed amendments to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) and to policies in the GPP.

### GPP Policy Amendments

Policy amendments will be proposed in nearly every section of the GPP but the scope of the amendments will vary from simple housekeeping changes to substantive policy additions. The chapters expected to contain the most significant proposed amendments include: Population and Employment, Land Use (primarily the urban-related subsections), Future Land Use Map (both the narrative section of the GPP and the map itself), Housing, Transportation, Capital Facilities, Utilities and a new chapter for Parks. Amendments to the other sections of the GPP are expected to be primarily housekeeping changes.

Proposed amendments can be classified by type of change being proposed:

- A. **Housekeeping** amendments include: updates to dates, code citations and GMA-specific language; removal of outdated language or completed tasks where policy support is no longer needed; and language to improve clarity of intent but which does not change the substance of the policy;
- B. **Update-related** amendments include changes necessary to reflect the 2015 Update GMA requirements and consistency with the Multi-county planning policies in Vision 2040 and the Regional Growth Strategy, Countywide Planning Policies, growth targets, urban development and density, transportation and capital facilities. These amendments are related to the GMA requirements in RCW 36.70A.130(3);

- C. **Compliance**-related amendments include GPP policy updates associated with specific issues identified by the County Council as required by the GMA in RCW 36.70A.130(1);
- D. **Initiatives** supporting other update requirements or GMA-related issues such as parks, housing, cultural resources, public health and healthy communities.

The table in Attachment 1 to this memo indicates the expected scope of amendments (A, B, C and/or D) proposed for each section of the GPP and the preliminary schedule for Planning Commission review. For this project we would like to use study sessions, less formal than briefings, where we can sit around the table together, walk through the proposed changes chapter-by-chapter and have a conversation. Since a quorum of the Planning Commission would likely be present, these study sessions should be open to the public.

### **Map Amendments**

Map amendments proposed for the 2015 Update include: 1) revisions to narrative language in the GPP describing the purpose and intent for land use designations shown on the FLUM; and 2) Map changes on the FLUM and on the county's zoning map described below.

#### **Definitions of Changes Proposed on the FLUM**

**Infill Designation Changes.** Infill changes would allow higher densities in certain areas or to provide new commercial services in predominantly residential areas. Most are in the Southwest Urban Growth Area. Most of the proposed infill changes are at sites:

- Along arterial corridors;
- Near services and existing or planned transit;
- Adjacent to areas already planned for compact mixed-use development; and/or
- Commercial areas that could redevelop to mixed-use urban centers over time.

**Public Use/Institutional (P/I) Designations.** The Future Land Use map includes a Public Use/Institutional (P/I) plan designation. P/I can be applied to existing or planned public and private cemeteries, schools, parks, government buildings, utility plants and other government operations or properties within UGAs or adjacent to UGAs. The purpose of the exercise is to reflect existing uses and to provide a geographical framework to guide present and future implementation strategies for preserving open space and developing greenbelt corridors within and between urban growth areas. There are no specific implementing zones for this designation since zoning will vary from site to site. However, only zones that allow schools, parks, government buildings, utility plants or other government operations may implement this designation.

Alternative 3 proposes to designate numerous properties to the P/I designation mostly within the Southwest UGA. Other P/I changes occur in the Lake Stevens and Maltby UGAs. Some of the properties changing reflect the construction of a new public/institutional use since 2005. Examples include new parks and schools. Other properties are changing to reflect a broader interpretation of plan designation or to be consistent on sites such as parks where the application of P/I is not universal. Examples include county-owned drainage detention ponds and state wetland mitigation areas.

**Docket Changes.** Five cities have proposed Urban Growth Area (UGA) boundary modifications: Everett, Granite Falls, Arlington, Stanwood and Sultan. Everett and Granite Falls have each requested minor boundary expansions involving city-owned land not impacting urban capacity.

Arlington, Stanwood and Sultan have requested review of UGA adjustments (swap) reducing UGA at one location and adding UGA in another. These swaps have been designed to be capacity neutral and address issues related to cost efficiency for future utility service provision by these cities.

**Other Designation Changes.** These changes do not create additional population or employment capacity and are intended to give a reality check to the future land use map.

A broad number of changes are included in this category including:

- Technical corrections such as properties with split designations
- Up-designations where the current zoning allows a higher density than the comprehensive plan
- Down-designations where recently constructed development or grandfathered uses that do not match the comprehensive plan are unlikely to be redeveloped in the planning period
- Council remands from the last 10-year update in 2005 to resolve plan/zoning conflicts near 148th St and Seattle Hill Road

### **Definitions of Changes Proposed on the Zoning Map**

Where the Future Land Use Map presents the 20-year vision for unincorporated Snohomish County, zoning is used to implement this vision and define the rules under which a property may be developed. The proposed Zoning Map presents two categories of zoning changes:

**Infill Designations.** The proposed zoning changes in this category reflect the county-initiated area-wide rezones that are needed to implement the Infill Designation Changes shown on the Alternative 3 Future Land Use Map. These changes are mostly in the Southwest Urban Growth Area, with one area of change proposed within the Lake Stevens UGA.

**Implementation, Unique Situation, Reflects Residential Use.** *The proposed zoning changes under this category include area-wide rezones to properties where:*

- The comprehensive plan envisions apartments but the current zoning is for single family development. For example property designated Urban High Density Residential is zoned R-8400.
- There is an inconsistency between the comprehensive plan and zoning. For example where the current zoning is residential and the plan anticipates commercial development.
- There is a pattern of site specific rezones being approved by the Hearing Examiner to allow greater densities and in nearly all cases they have been approved. The remaining properties may be surrounded by higher density zoning on two, three or four sides. Rezoning these properties streamlines future development review processes.
- Future redevelopment at the current plan designation and zoning is not feasible or unlikely. For example recently built single family subdivisions that are unlikely to be redeveloped.

### **Other Documents**

In addition to the GPP and related maps, the Planning Commission will also be reviewing the Transportation Element, Chapter 30.66B SCC – Concurrency and Road Impact Mitigation, the Parks and Recreation Element, the Capital Facilities Plan and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

- The Transportation Element includes a project list generated from transportation modeling and level-of-service (LOS) consideration needed to mitigate the impacts from the forecasted growth.
- Chapter 30.66B SCC lays out the requirements for mitigating impacts on roads from development. Based on results from transportation analysis, amendments may be proposed to this code chapter.
- The Parks and Recreation Element includes a discussion of county resources and LOS.
- The Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) looks at changes in demand and costs for capital facilities and services due to population growth. Delivery of some capital facilities and services are sensitive to the population growth distribution (i.e. schools) while others are sensitive to total population growth (i.e. government services).
- The Draft Environmental Impact Statement provides a comparison of the impacts associated with the three alternatives – i.e. how the growth distributions, land use map changes and policy amendments affect the natural and built environments.

The three alternatives under consideration for the 2015 Update have been reviewed at earlier Planning Commission briefings in October 2013 and February 2014. All three alternatives plan for the same total growth but vary in how that growth is distributed between the cities and the unincorporated urban areas. Alternative 1 uses the initial growth targets adopted by the County Council. Alternatives 2 and 3 use the growth targets recommended by Snohomish County Tomorrow. Alternative 2 is the “No Action” alternative. Alternative 3 is further differentiated as it includes the proposed policy and map amendments. Policy amendments may also be considered under Alternative 1. The table below provides an overview comparison of the three alternatives.

	Alt. 1	Alt. 2	Alt. 3
<b>Population Growth:</b>			
<b>Initial Growth Targets</b>	<b>X</b>		
<b>SCT-recommended Targets</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Employment Growth Targets</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Policy Changes</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>
<b>Map Changes:</b>			
<b>Technical changes and amendments</b>			<b>X</b>
<b>Land use and zoning infill</b>			<b>X</b>
<b>City docket proposals</b>			<b>X</b>

#### **Role of the Planning Commission**

The County Council established the scope of the alternatives they were interested in considering for the 2015 Update. The Council set the countywide growth target and adopted initial growth targets for each city, unincorporated UGA and rural/resource area, provided direction on city

proposals for UGA boundaries and expressed interest in maintaining existing unincorporated urban densities and UGA boundaries (i.e., no downzones and no UGA expansions). The Planning Commission's role is to select, from within the framework established by Council, a preferred alternative to recommend to the County Council. The Planning Commission may select one of the alternatives as presented in the DEIS or mix and match from the components reviewed in the DEIS, for example, select Alternative 1 population distribution but also include the technical map changes from Alternative 3. The Planning commission's recommendation should also include direction on the proposed policy amendments and select growth targets for GPP Appendix D.

If after reviewing the materials and public testimony, the Planning Commission opts to recommend an alternative beyond the scope established by Council and reviewed in the DEIS, additional environmental review would need to be completed before the County Council could consider adopting the Planning Commission's recommendation. This additional review would delay the project schedule and increase costs.

#### Attachment 1: Scope and Proposed Schedule for Planning Commission Review of 2015 Update Documents

Cc: Clay White  
Barb Mock  
Jacqueline Reid  
Steve Thomsen  
Bobann Fogard  
Doug McCormick  
Tom Teigen  
Sharon Swan  
Laura Kisielius  
Justin Kasting  
Peter Camp  
Will Hall



## Scope and Proposed Schedule for Planning Commission Review of 2015 Update Documents

Document: Chapter - Section	Scope of Amendments	Study Session(s)	Briefing	Hearing
GPP: Introduction	Updated narrative	4/8/14		10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Population and Employment			3/25/14	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Land Use – Introduction	Updated narrative	5/27	9/9, 9/23	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Land Use – Urban Growth Areas	A,B	5/27, 6/24	9/9, 9/23	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Land Use – Urban Development Patterns	A,B,D	5/27, 6/24	9/9, 9/23	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Land Use – Centers	A,B,D	5/27, 6/24	9/9, 9/23	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Land Use – Urban Design	A,B	5/27, 6/24	9/9, 9/23	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Land Use – Small Area and Neighborhood Structure	A,B	5/27, 6/24	9/9, 9/23	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Land Use – Rural Lands	A,D	5/27, 6/24	9/9, 9/23	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Land Use – Agricultural Lands	A,D	5/27, 6/24	9/9, 9/23	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Land Use – Forest Lands	( )			
GPP: Land Use – Mineral Lands	( )			
GPP: Land Use – Open Space, Shorelines, Scenic Resources	A,D	5/27, 6/24	9/9, 9/23	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Land Use – Cultural Resources	D	5/27, 6/24	9/9, 9/23	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Land Use – Airport Compatibility	C	5/27, 6/24	9/9, 9/23	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Land Use – Transfer/Purchase of Development Rights	( )			
GPP: Land Use – Future Land Use Map	A,B,C	5/27, 6/24, 7/8	9/9, 9/23	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Housing	A,D	4/22/14	9/9, 9/23	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Transportation	A,B	8/12/14	9/9, 9/23	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Capital Facilities	A,B		8/26/14	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Utilities	A,B		8/26/14	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Economic Development	A	4/8/14	9/9, 9/23	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Natural Environment	A	4/8/14	9/9, 9/23	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Interjurisdictional Coordination	A	4/8/14	9/9, 9/23	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Parks (NEW)	(New chapter) D	7/22/14	9/9, 9/23	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Appendix A – County Profile	Delete – merged Into Intro	4/8/14	9/9, 9/23	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Appendix B – Siting Essential Public Facilities	Delete	4/8/14	9/9, 9/23	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Appendix C – GMA Goals/GPP Table	Delete	4/8/14	9/9, 9/23	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Appendix D – Growth Targets	B	9/9/14	9/9, 9/23	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Appendix E - Glossary	Minor additions/changes	4/8/14	9/9, 9/23	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Appendix F – Review Criteria for School Plans	( )			

Attachment 1

GPP: Appendix G – Introduction to 1995 Plan	Delete	4/8/14	9/9, 9/23	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Appendix H – Master and Conceptual Plan for Centers	Delete	4/8/14	9/9, 9/23	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Appendix I – List of Technical Documents & Reports	Minor additions	4/8/14	9/9, 9/23	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Map Portfolio – Future Land Use Map	Alt 3: Technical, Infill, Docket	4/8, 5/27, 6/24, 7/8	9/23/14	10/7-9, 14-16
GPP: Map Portfolio – Mineral Resource Lands Map	()			
GPP: Map Portfolio – Municipal Urban Growth Areas Map	()			
GPP: Map Portfolio – Open Space Corridors & Greenbelt Areas	()			
GPP: Map Portfolio – Lands Useful for Public Purposes	()			
Transportation Element	(Not applicable)	8/12/14	9/9, 9/23	10/7-9, 14-16
Capital Facilities Plan (CFP)	(Not applicable)	8/26/14	9/9, 9/23	9/23/14
Parks & Recreation Element (formerly Parks & Recreation Plan)	(Not applicable)	7/22/14	9/9, 9/23	10/7-9, 14-16
Chapter 30.66B SCC	LOS revisions proposed	8/12/14 (?)	9/16/14	10/7-9, 14-16
Zoning Map	A,B	4/8, 5/27, 6/24, 7/8	9/23/14	10/7-9, 14-16
Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)	(Not applicable)	9/9/14	9/9, 9/23	Public comment ends 10/9/14

KEY: Scope of Amendments:

A = Housekeeping (Dates, cross reference citations, GMA language consistency, remove outdated language or completed tasks, improved language to clarify intent)

B = Update (Changes necessary to reflect 2015 Update)

C = Compliance (Changes associated with compliance issues)

D = Initiatives (Changes to implement new initiatives: Parks, Health, Housing)

() = No Change Proposed